

Framing Future Priorities

Downtown Gloucester

August 20th, 2013

Mayor Carolyn Kirk

Welcome

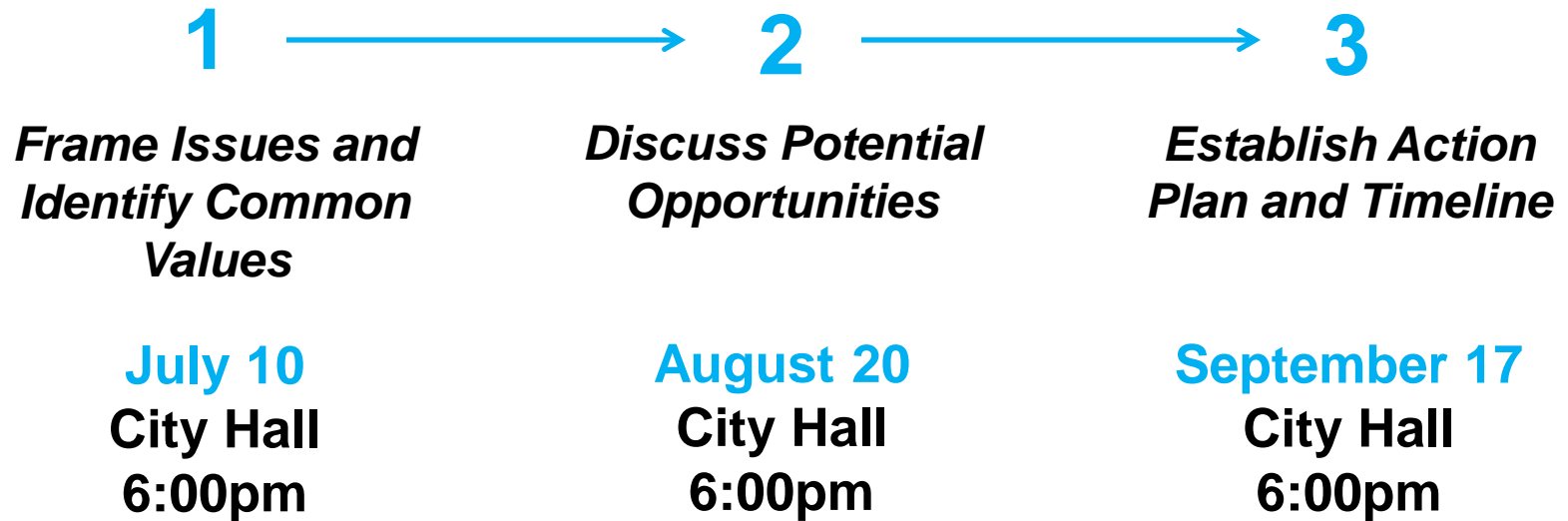
Tom Daniel

Community Development Director

Background for tonight's discussion

The Big Picture

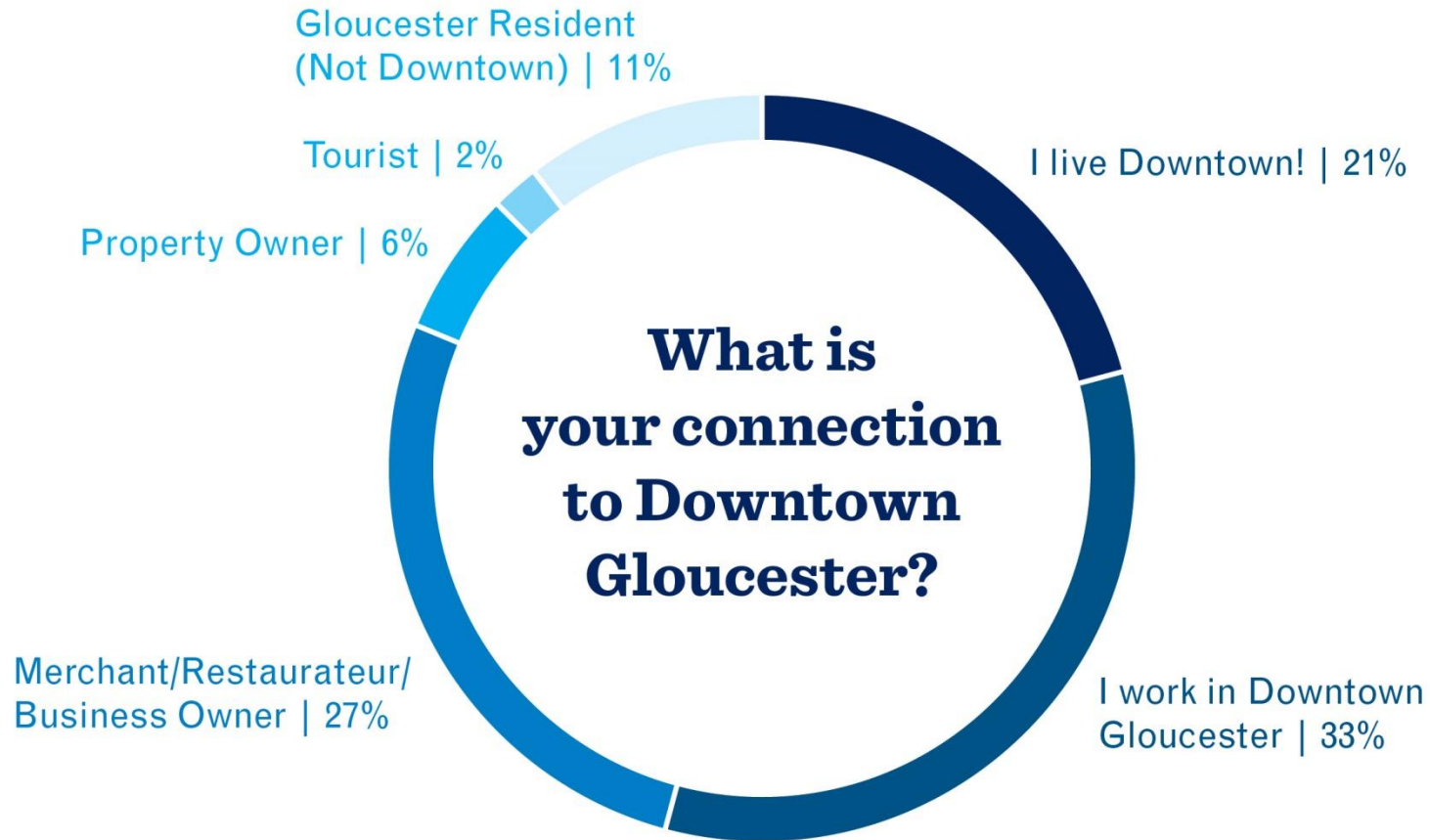
Tonight is the second in a series of meetings



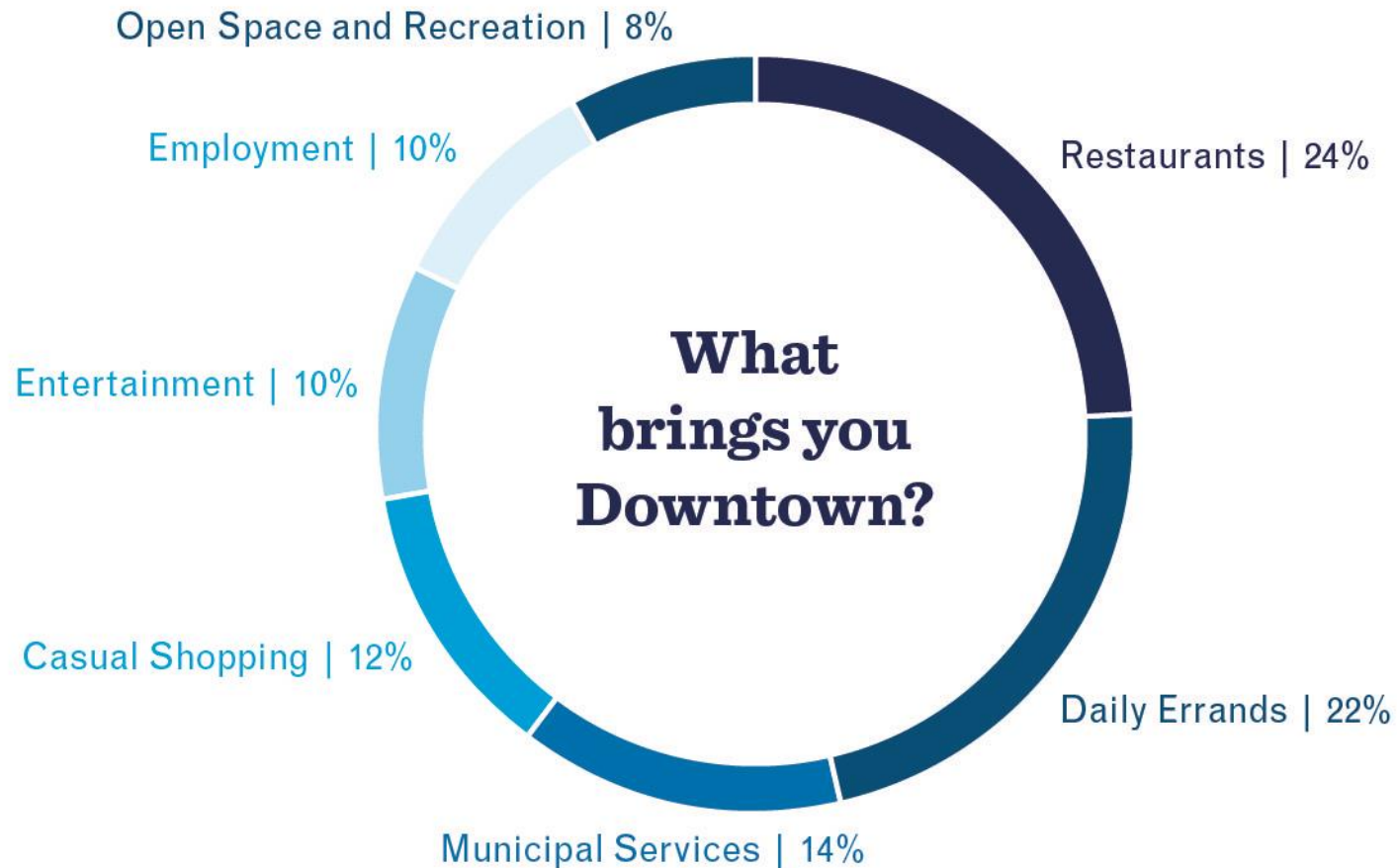
Here is what we heard!

1. People value an active Downtown Gloucester
2. People value an authentic (working) downtown
3. People value the mosaic of downtown uses and housing types
4. People value downtown being focused on the needs of Gloucester residents first and foremost
5. People value arts and culture downtown
6. People find that moving around downtown (in car or on foot) can be difficult

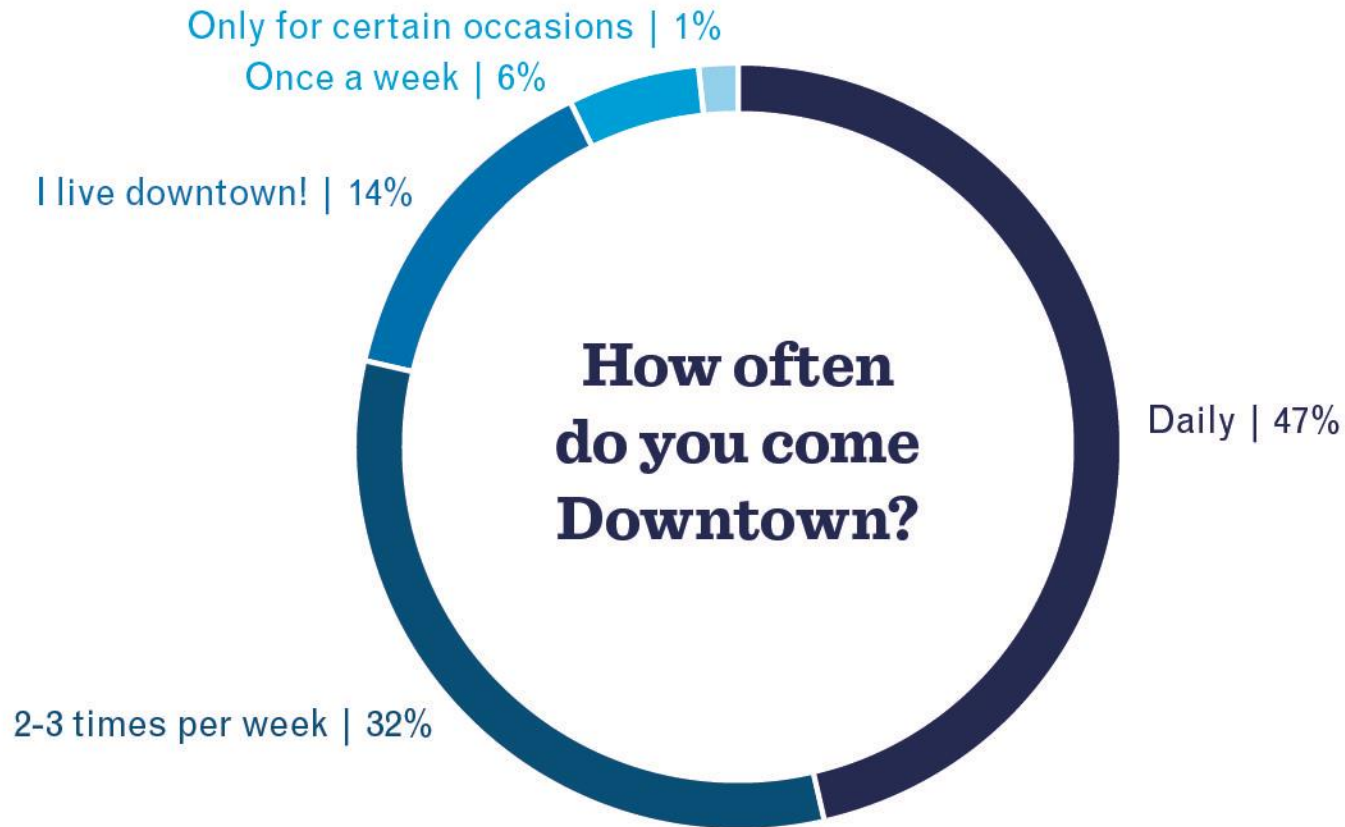
Here is what we heard!



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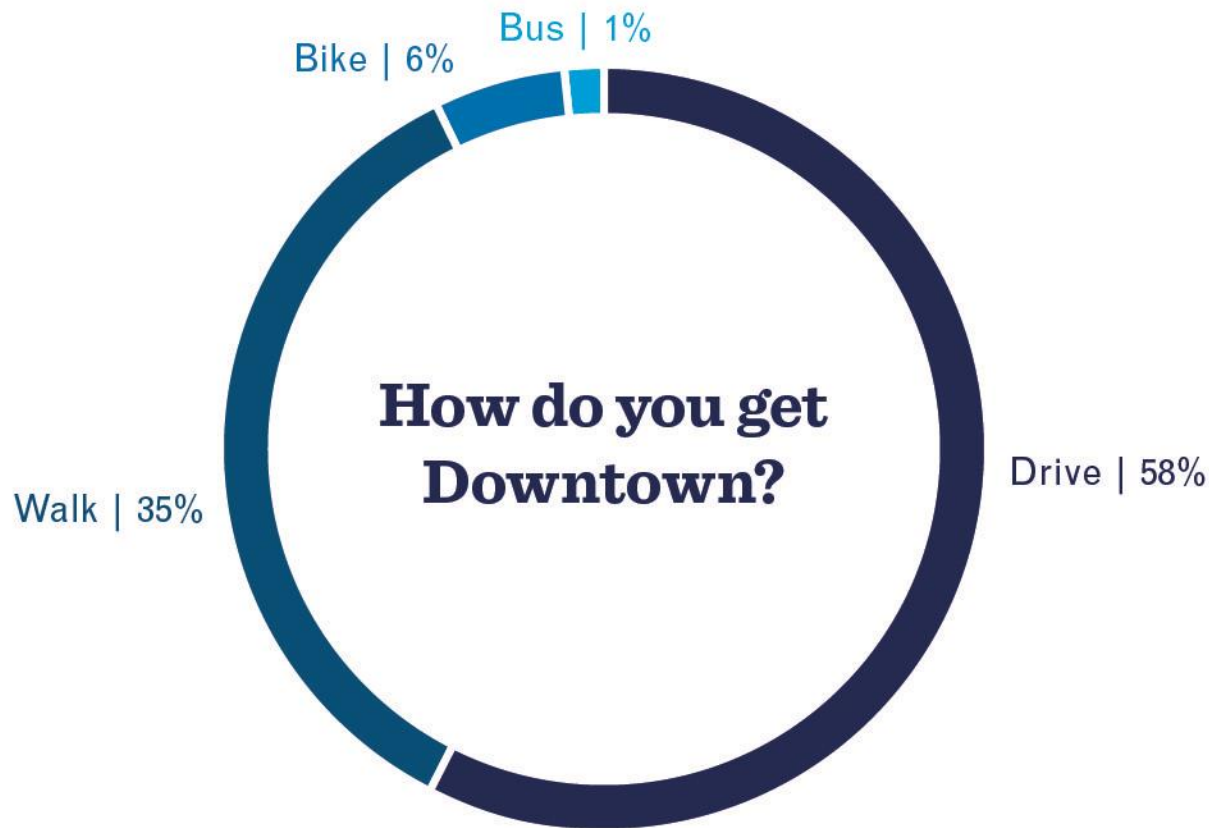


Here is what we heard!



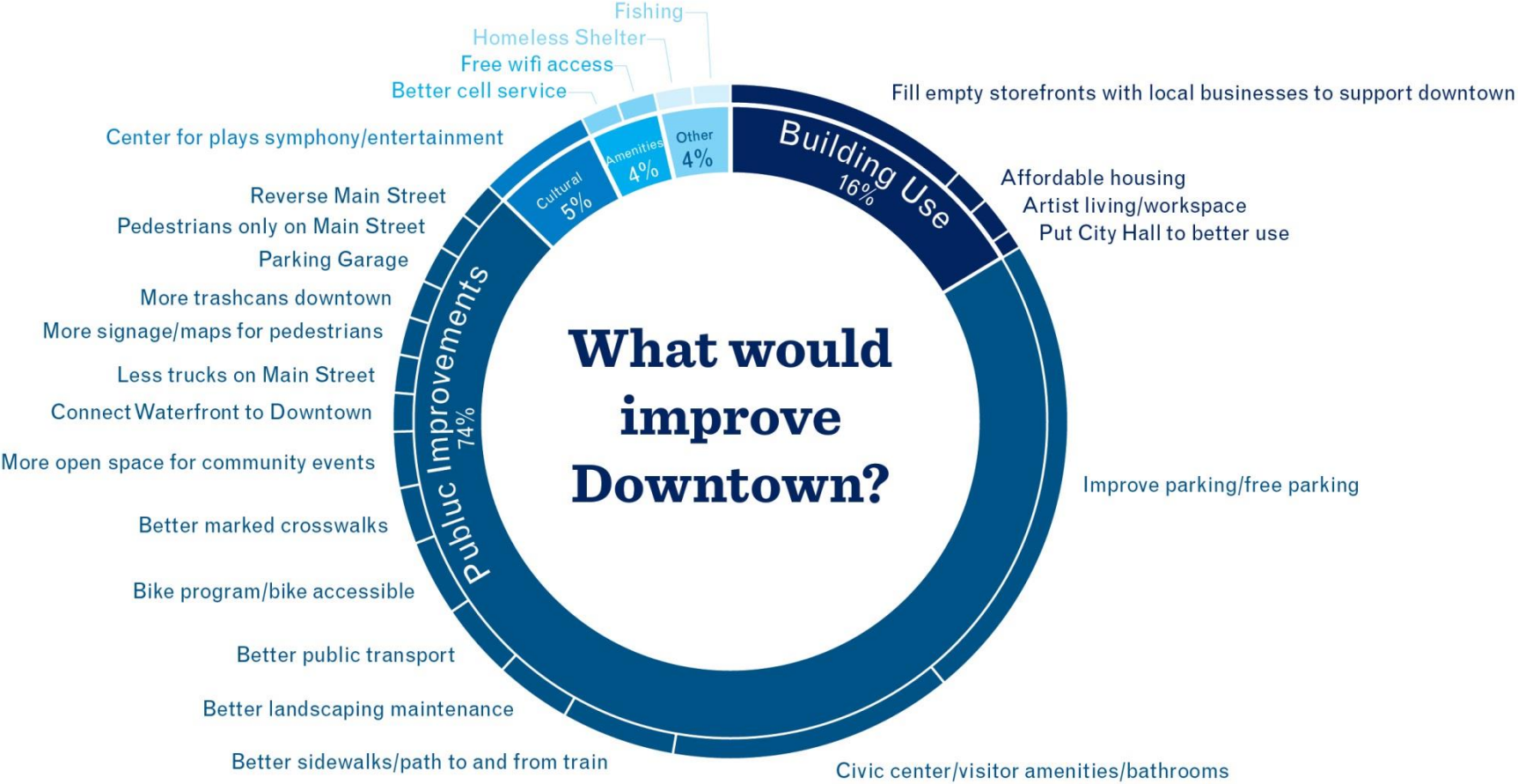
Half of those surveyed use Downtown on a daily basis!

Here is what we heard!



A high walk percentage means people living in or near downtown find it easy to walk to.

Here is what we heard!



So here's what we do!

How can the Downtown residential neighborhood support Main Street (and vice versa)?

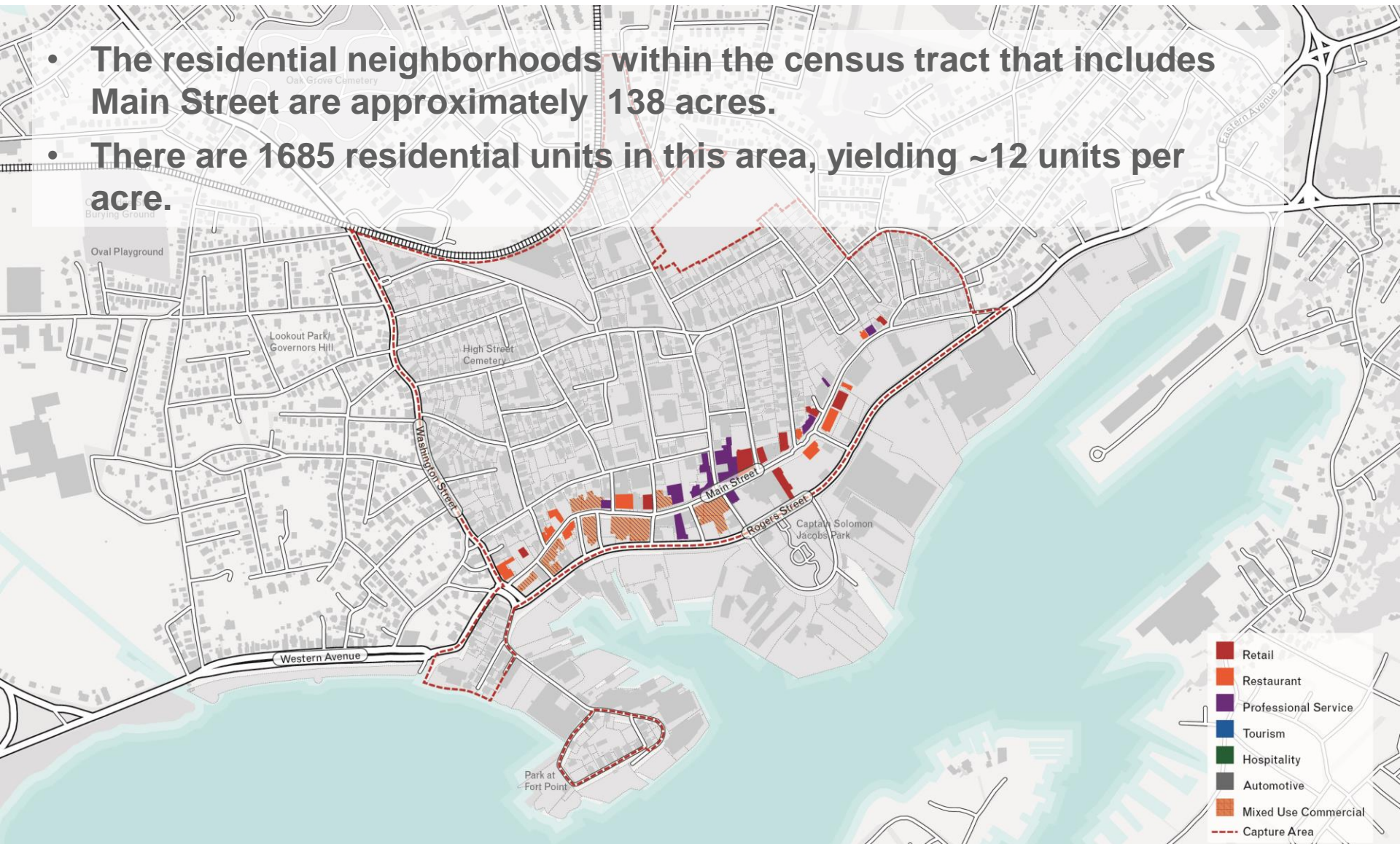
Understand demographics of nearby residents to determine potential market for new Downtown residential and retail.

Determine walkshed from train station to understand the best location for housing for commuters seeking a walkable lifestyle.

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- The residential neighborhoods within the census tract that includes Main Street are approximately 138 acres.
- There are 1685 residential units in this area, yielding ~12 units per acre.

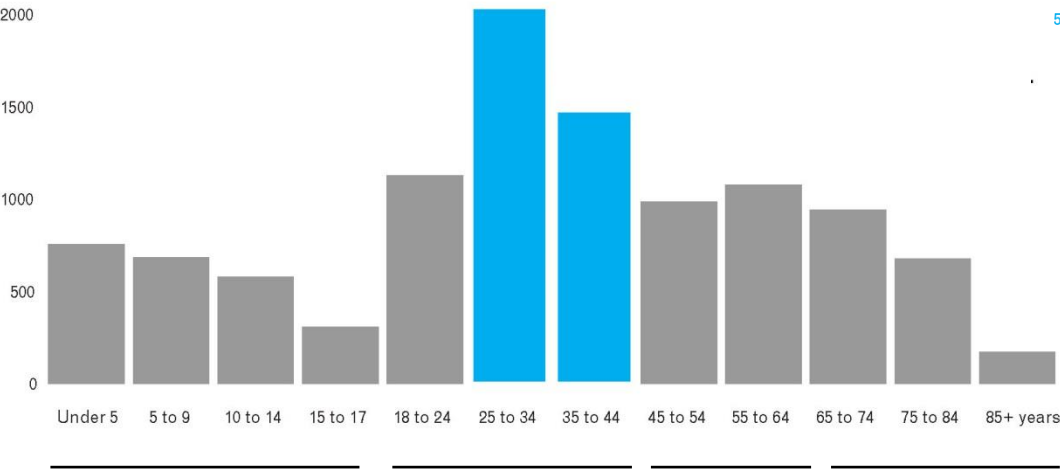


How can the Downtown residential neighborhood support Main Street (and vice versa)?

Understand demographics of nearby residents to determine potential market for new Downtown residential and retail.

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Residents in each Age Group (1990)



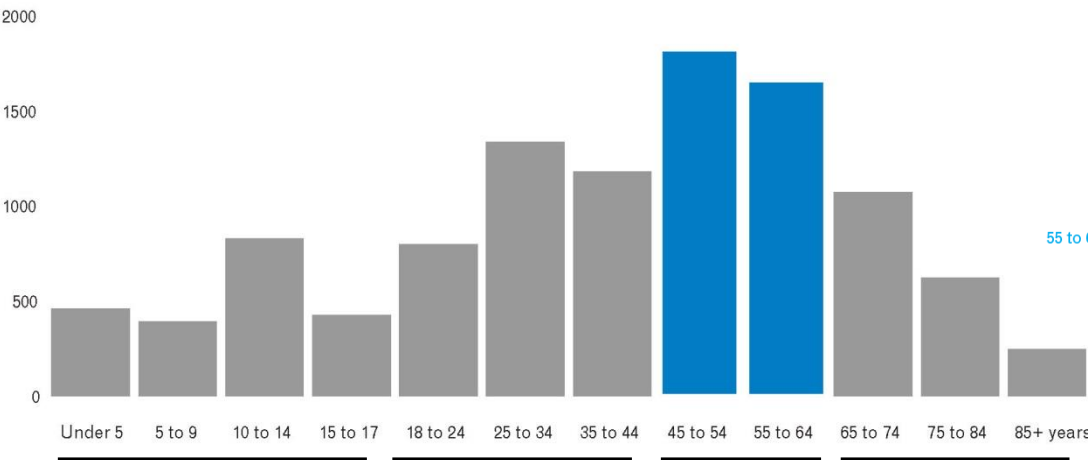
School Age

Young Workforce

Middle-aged Workforce

Retirees

Residents in each Age Group (2011)

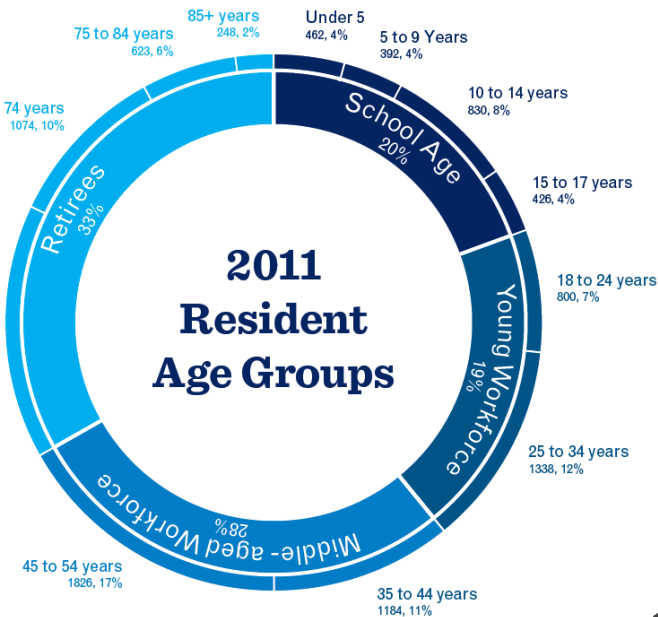
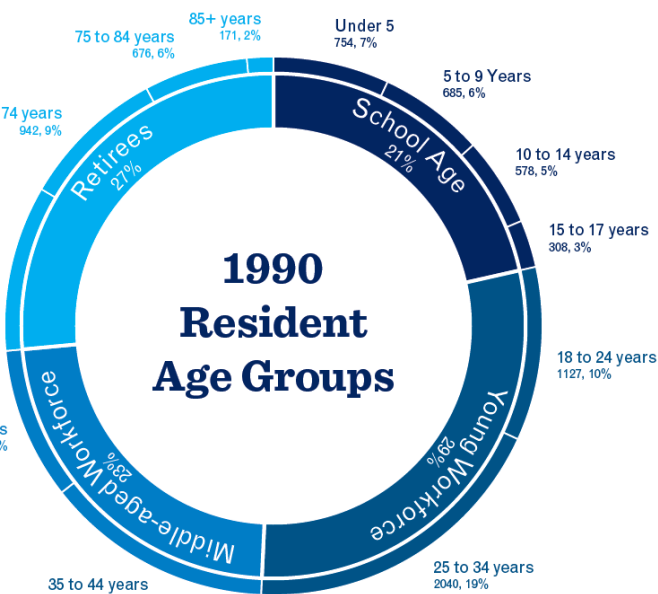


School Age

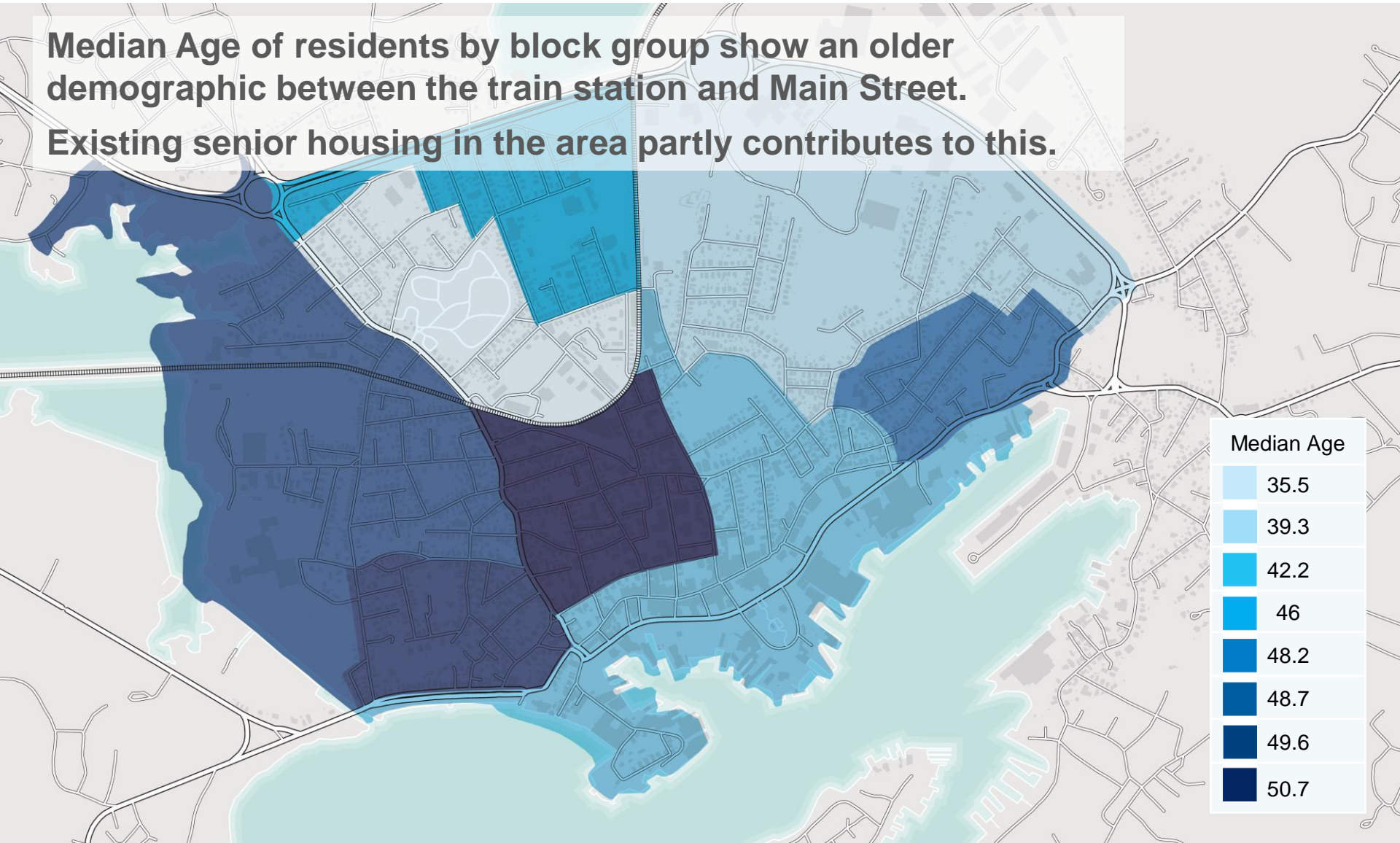
Young Workforce

Middle-aged Workforce

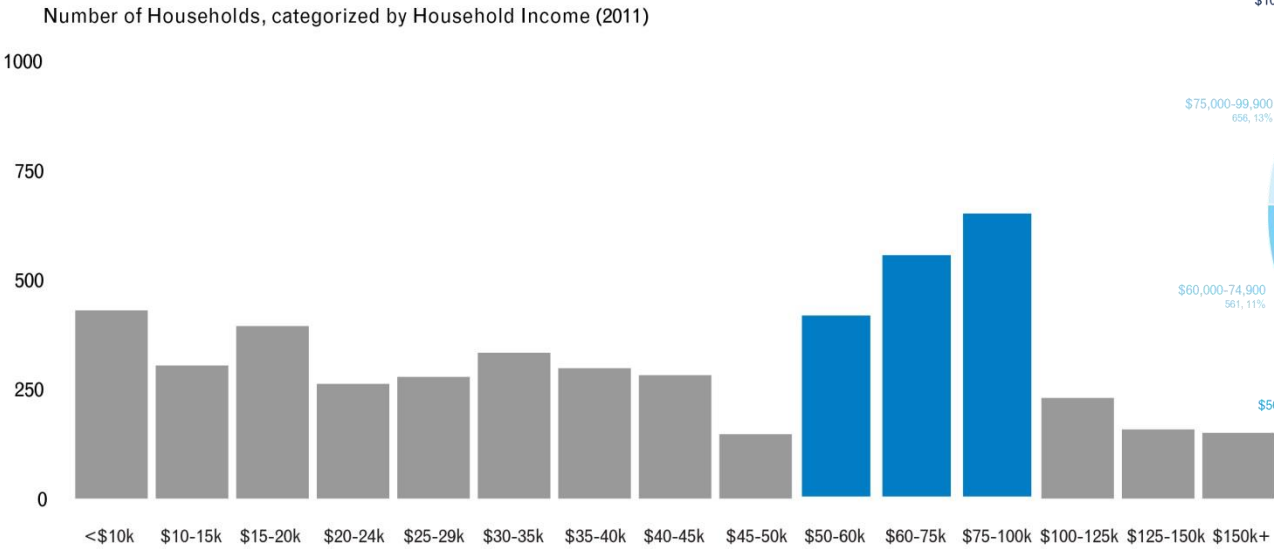
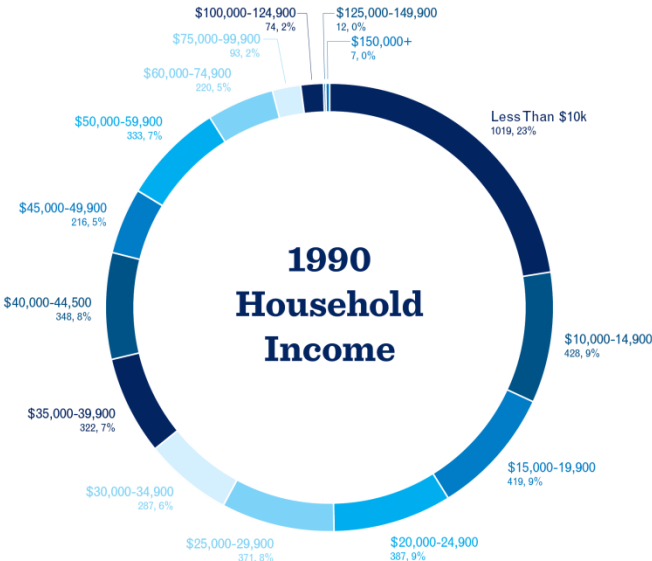
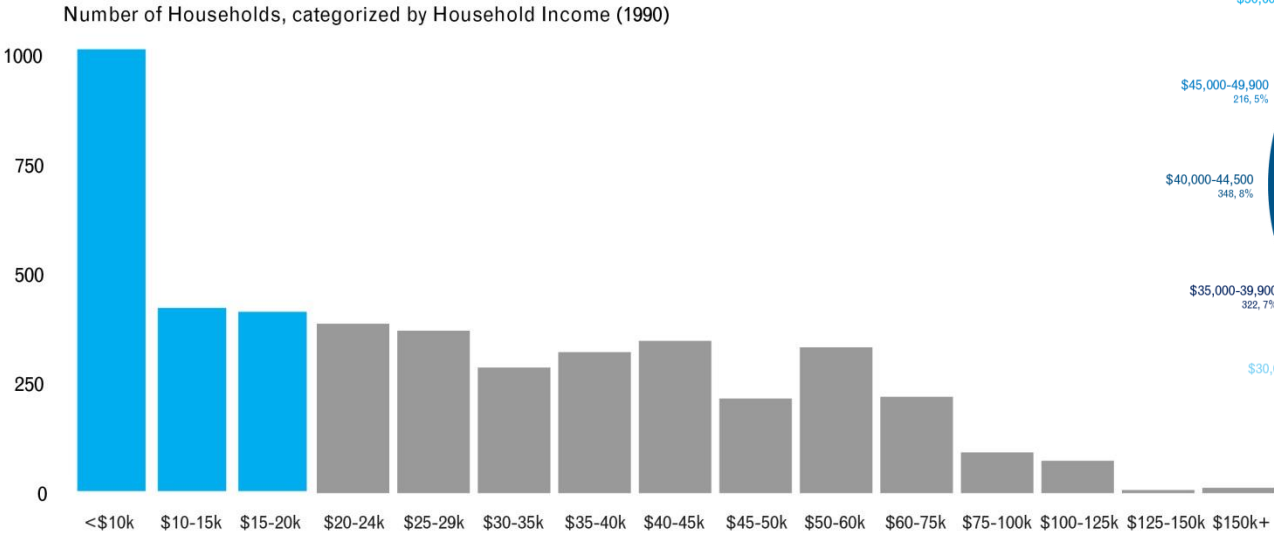
Retirees



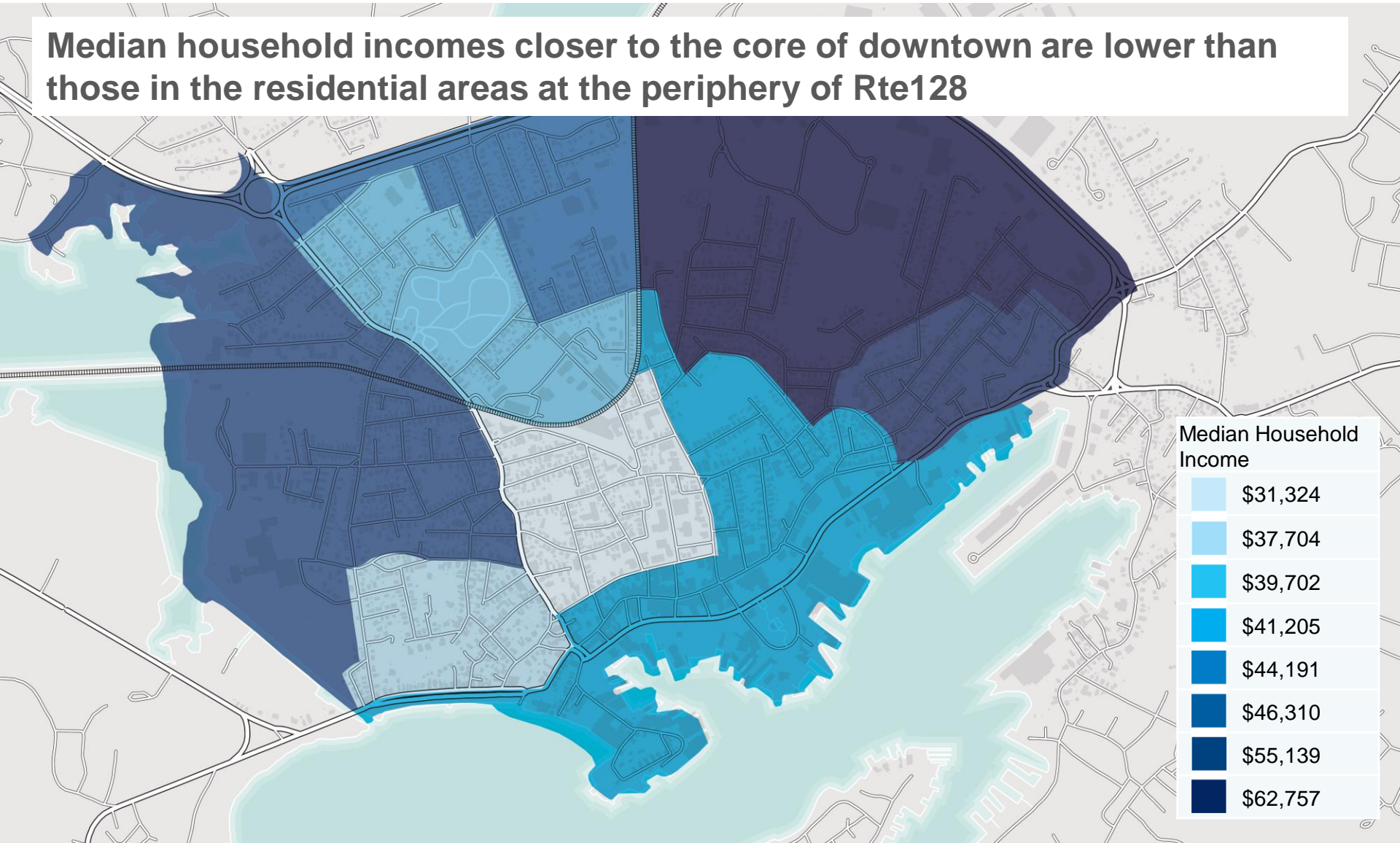
Median Age of residents by block group show an older demographic between the train station and Main Street. Existing senior housing in the area partly contributes to this.



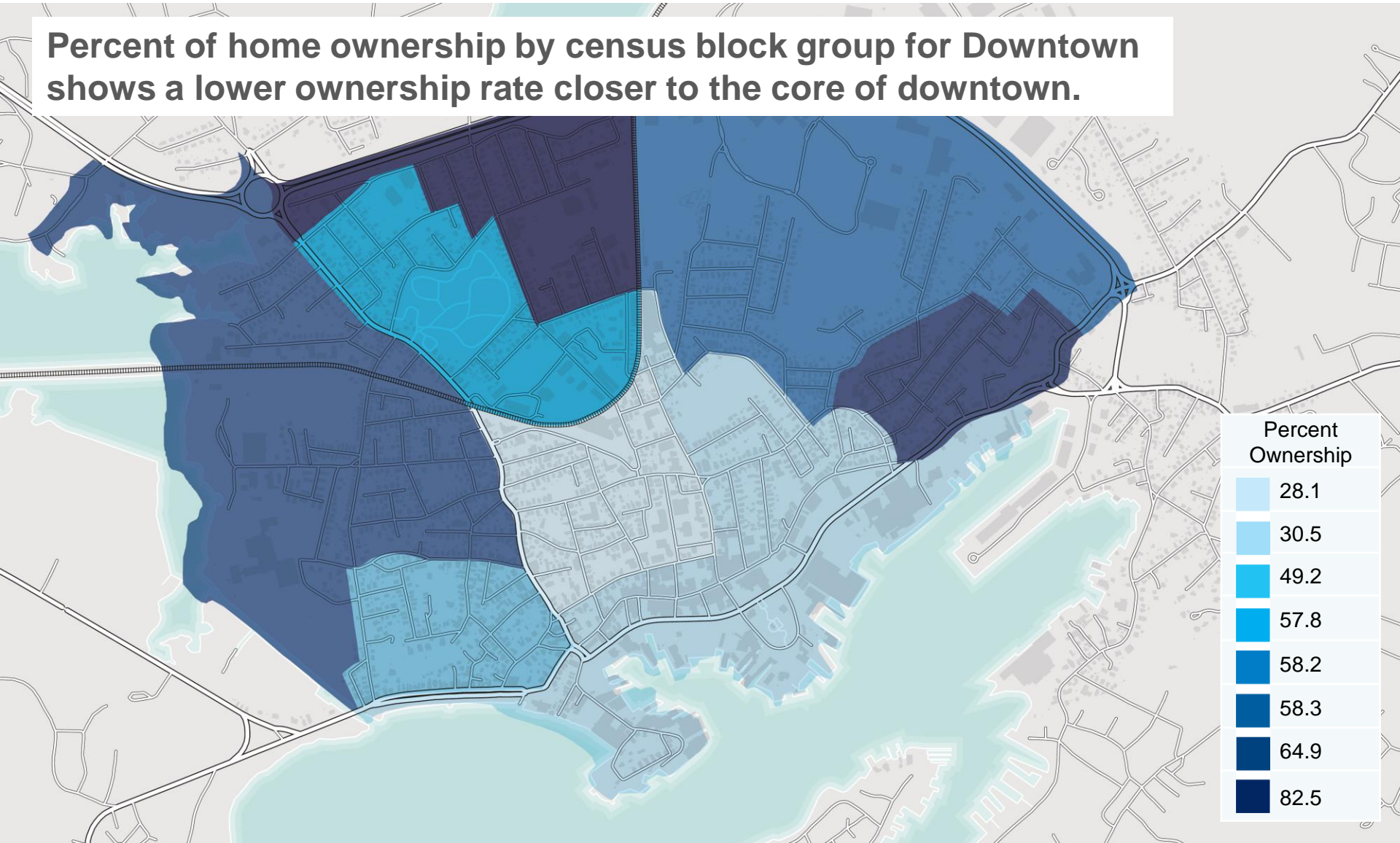
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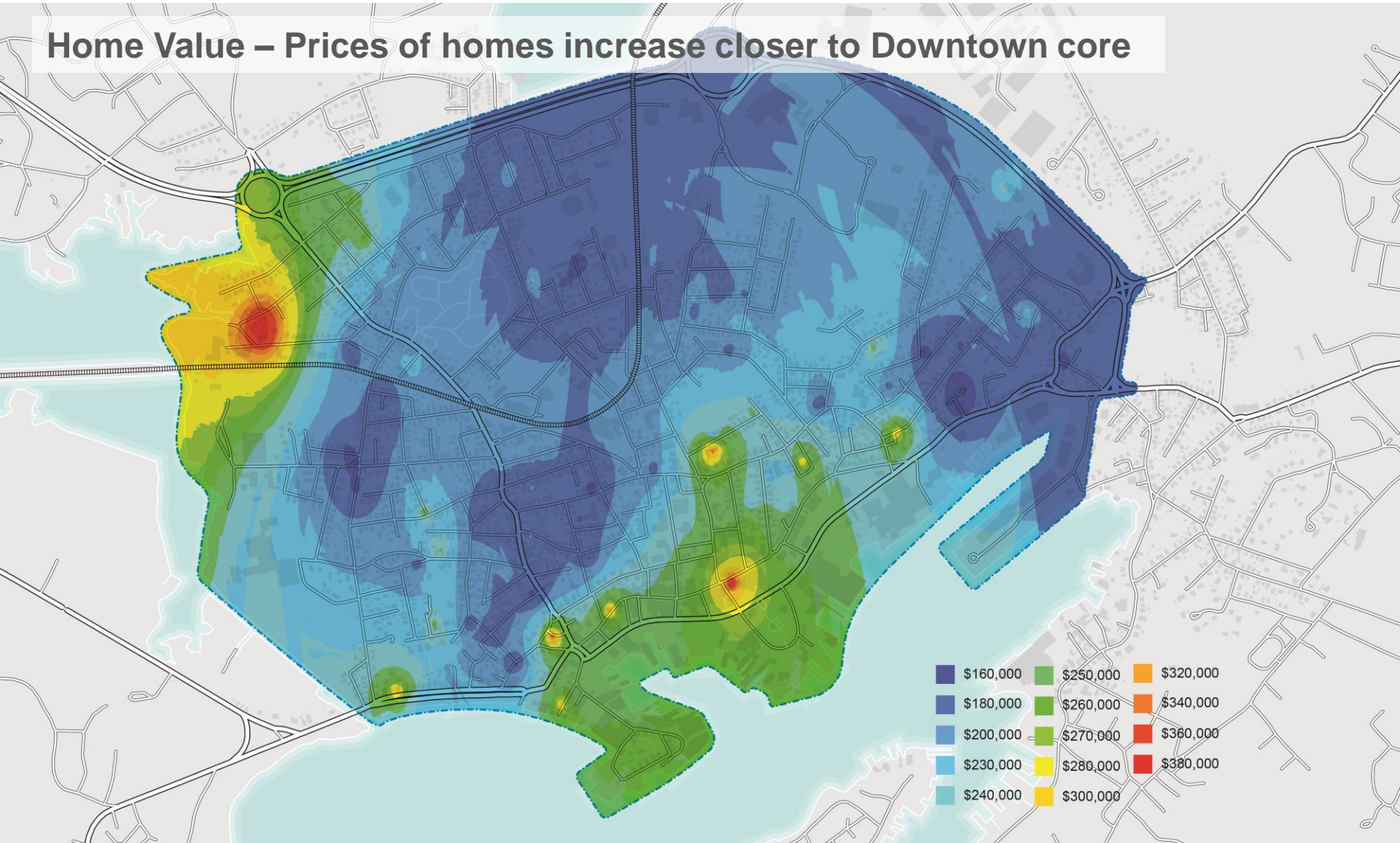
Median household incomes closer to the core of downtown are lower than those in the residential areas at the periphery of Rte128



Percent of home ownership by census block group for Downtown shows a lower ownership rate closer to the core of downtown.



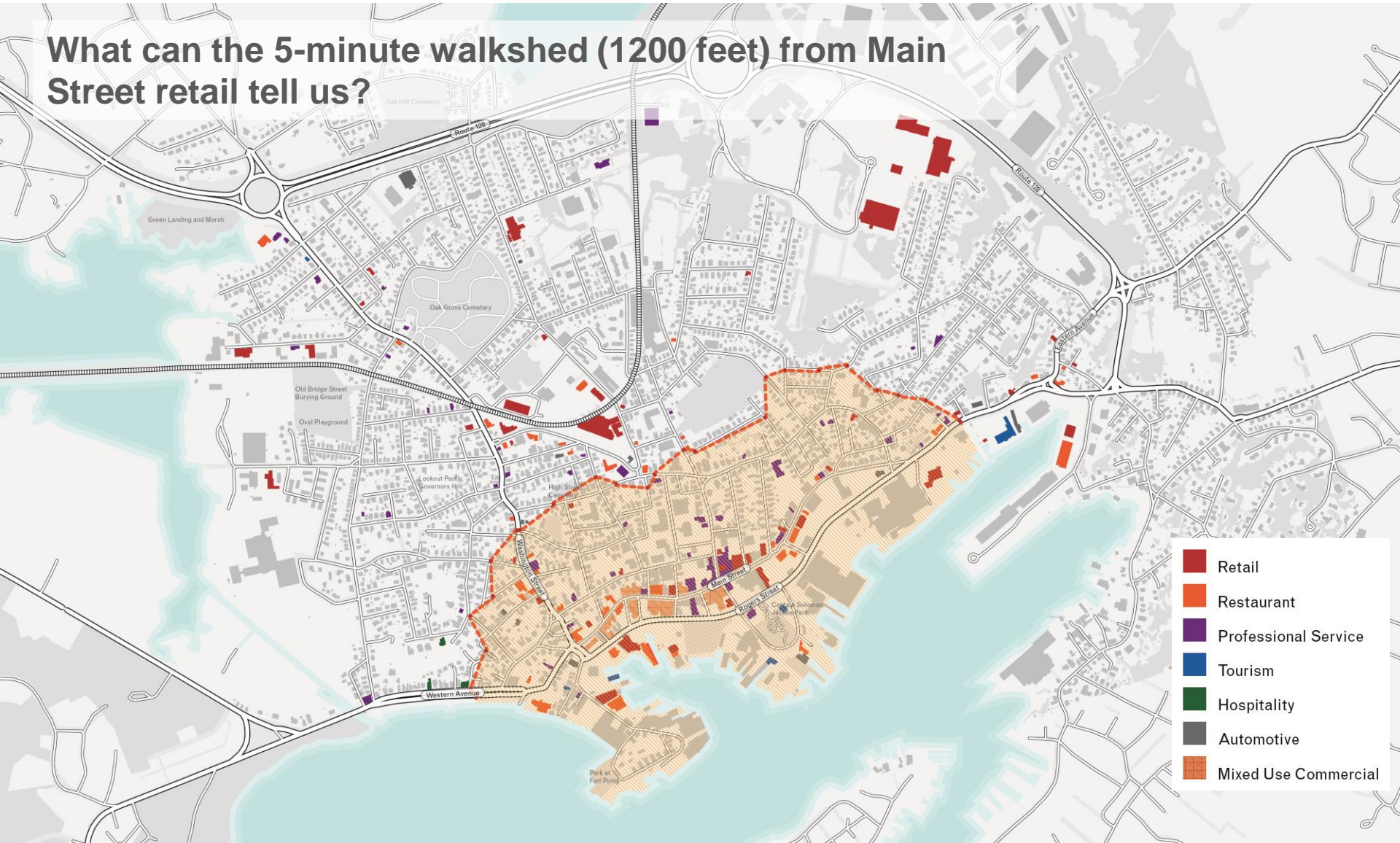
Home Value – Prices of homes increase closer to Downtown core



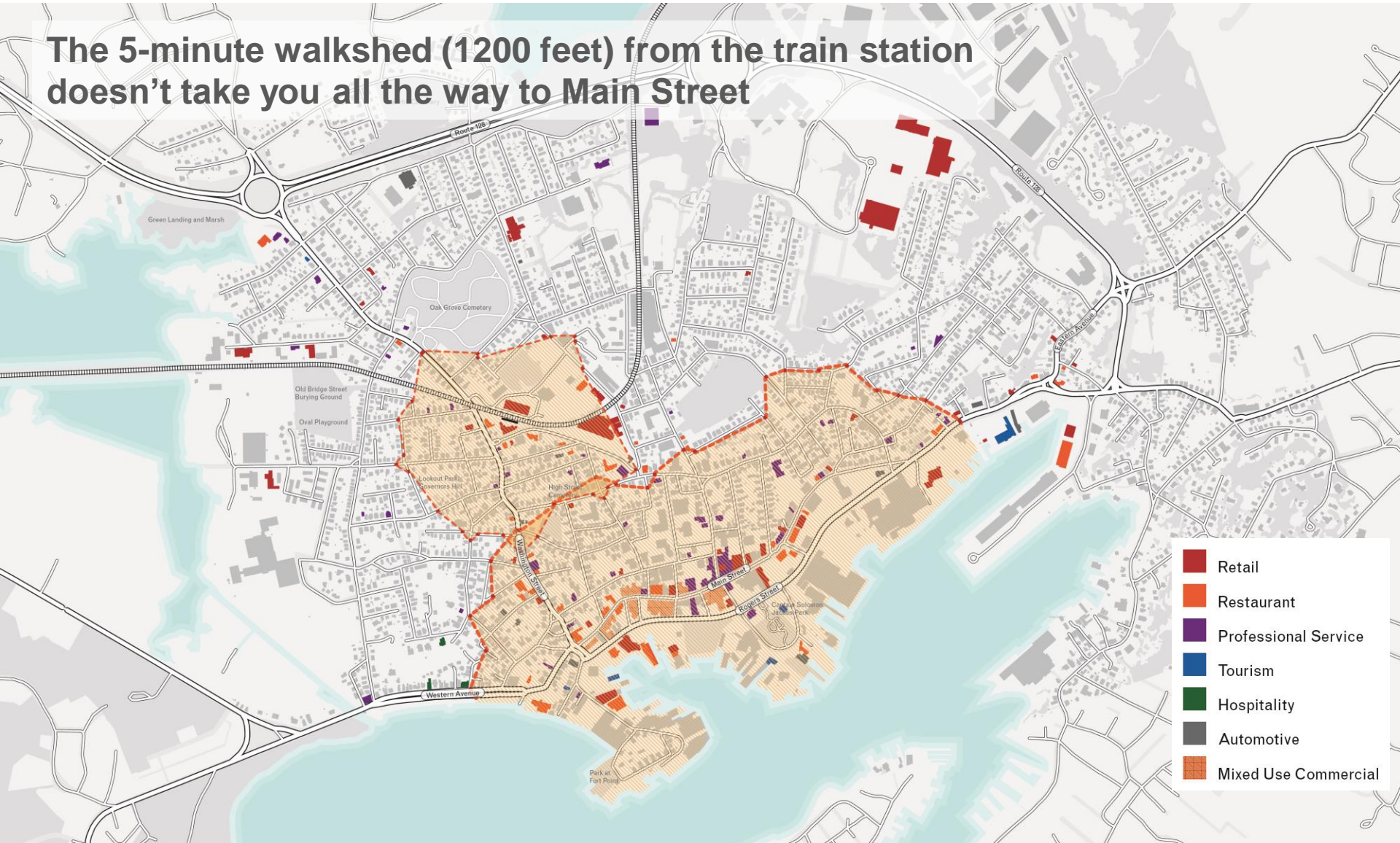
How can the Downtown residential neighborhood support Main Street (and vice versa)?

Determine walkshed from train station to understand the best location for housing for people seeking a walkable lifestyle.

What can the 5-minute walkshed (1200 feet) from Main Street retail tell us?

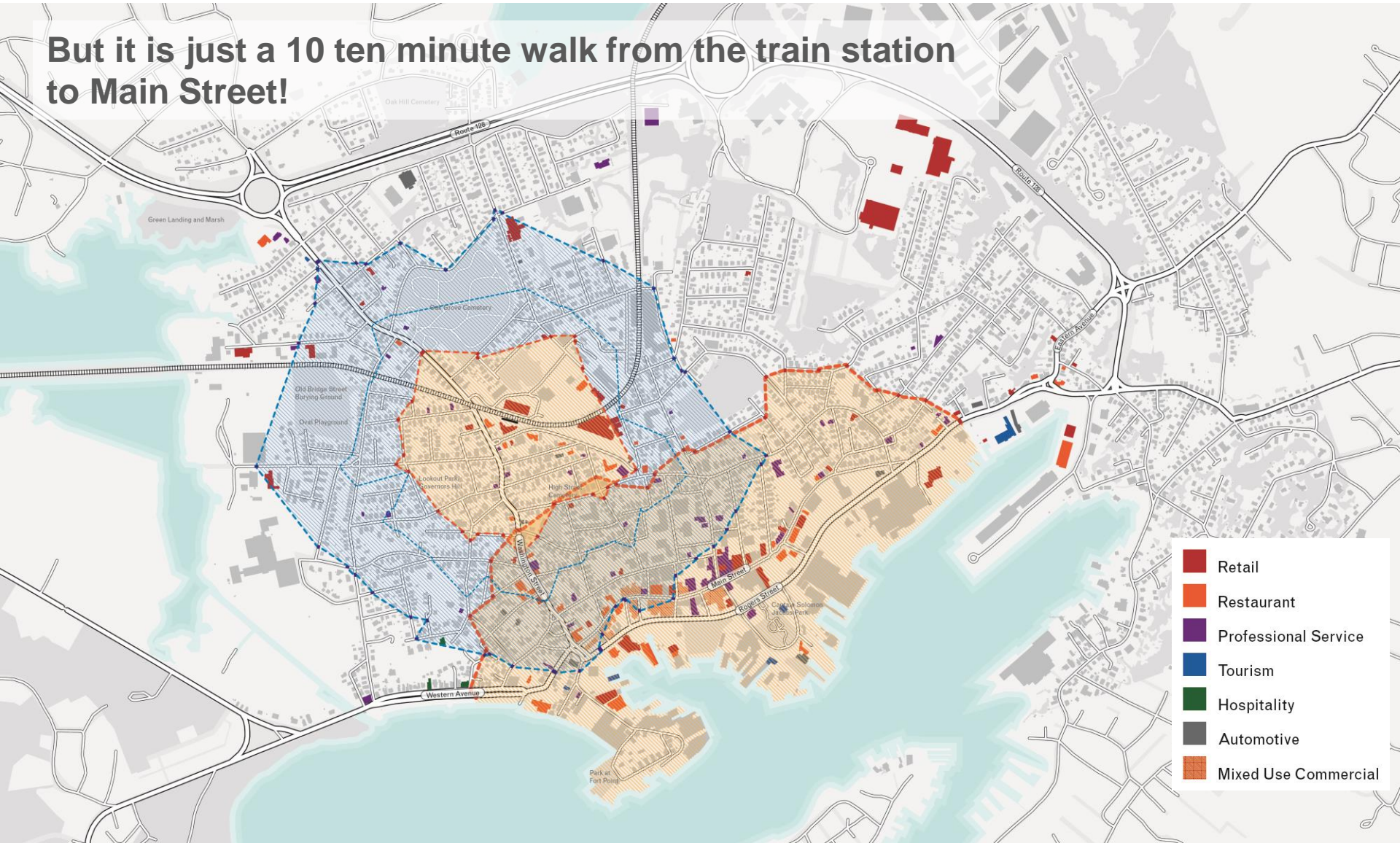


The 5-minute walkshed (1200 feet) from the train station doesn't take you all the way to Main Street

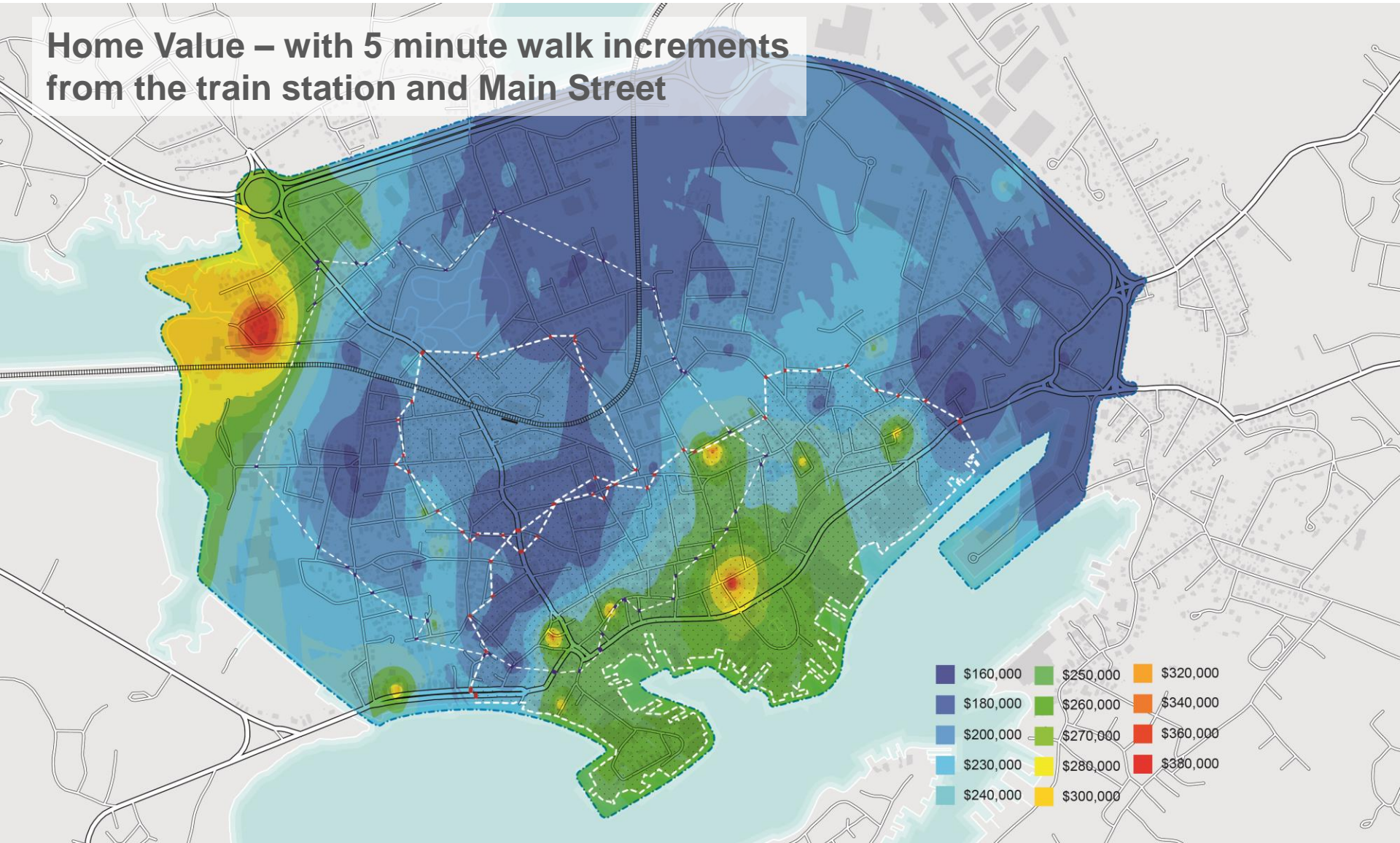


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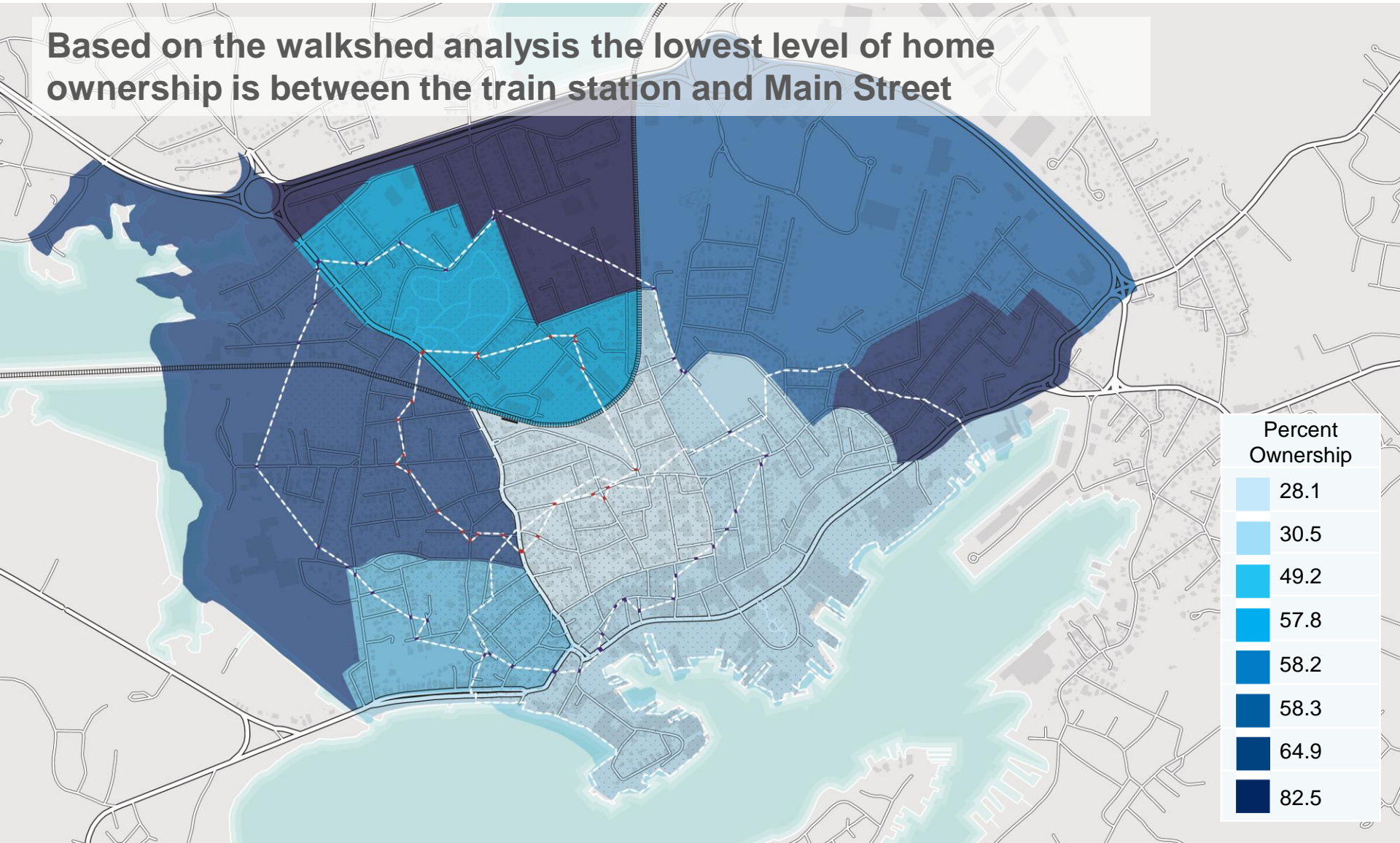
But it is just a 10 ten minute walk from the train station
to Main Street!



Home Value – with 5 minute walk increments
from the train station and Main Street



Based on the walkshed analysis the lowest level of home ownership is between the train station and Main Street



So here's what we do!

Figure out Main Street

Understand existing and potential future parking capacity to support additional housing, retail, and civic uses.

Determine vacancies and capacity of Main Street buildings for additional housing and retail.

What should new development on Main Street look like?

How can the Downtown residential neighborhood support Main Street (and vice versa)?

Understand existing and potential future parking capacity to support additional housing, retail, and civic uses.

- Existing zoning does not require any parking for retail within 400ft of a municipal parking lot, if it is under 10,000sf and in a building constructed before 1990
- Much of Main Street lies within a 400ft radius and is composed of small commercial uses in pre-war buildings.





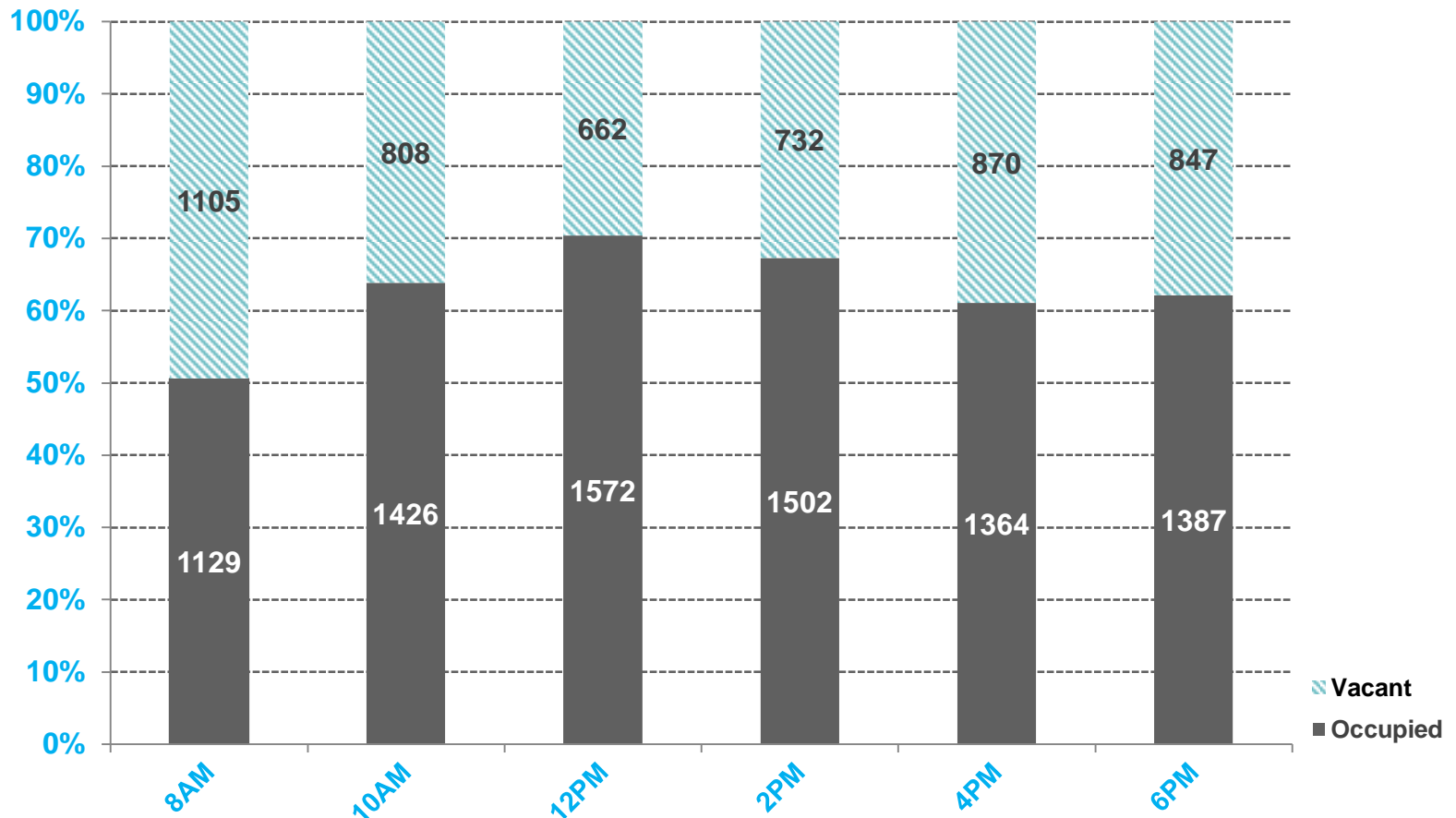
The majority of Main Street's uses are fall within two parking categories, 1) Residential and 2) Retail, Public Buildings and Office

- 1224 spaces* would be “required” if the existing uses were built by a progressive urban developer –
- 908 spaces** of public and private surface lot spaces are available within one block of Main Street.
- 398 on-street spaces are within a block of Main Street



- The City is currently undertaking a detailed parking analysis for the entire downtown area

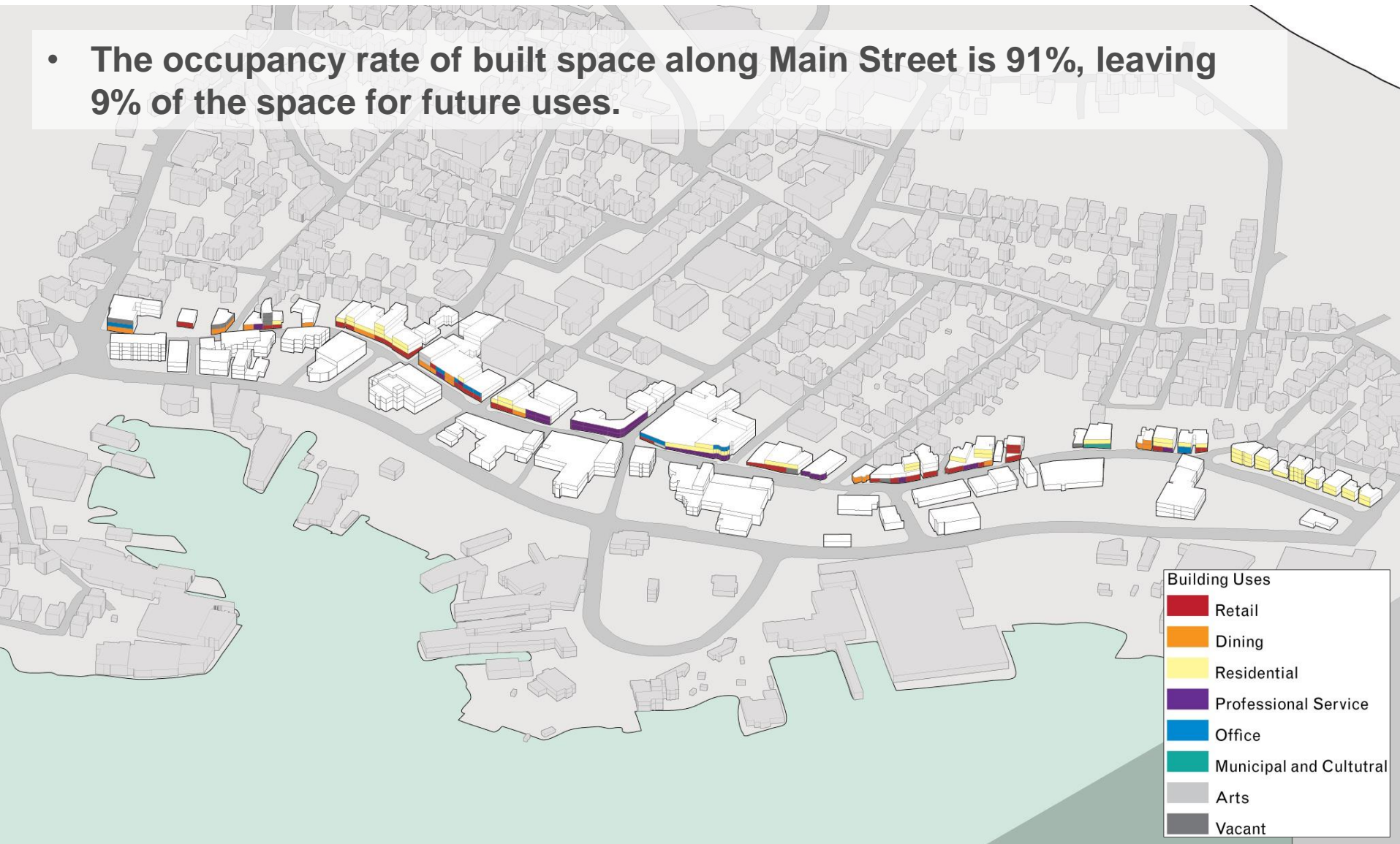
Weekday Downtown Parking Utilization

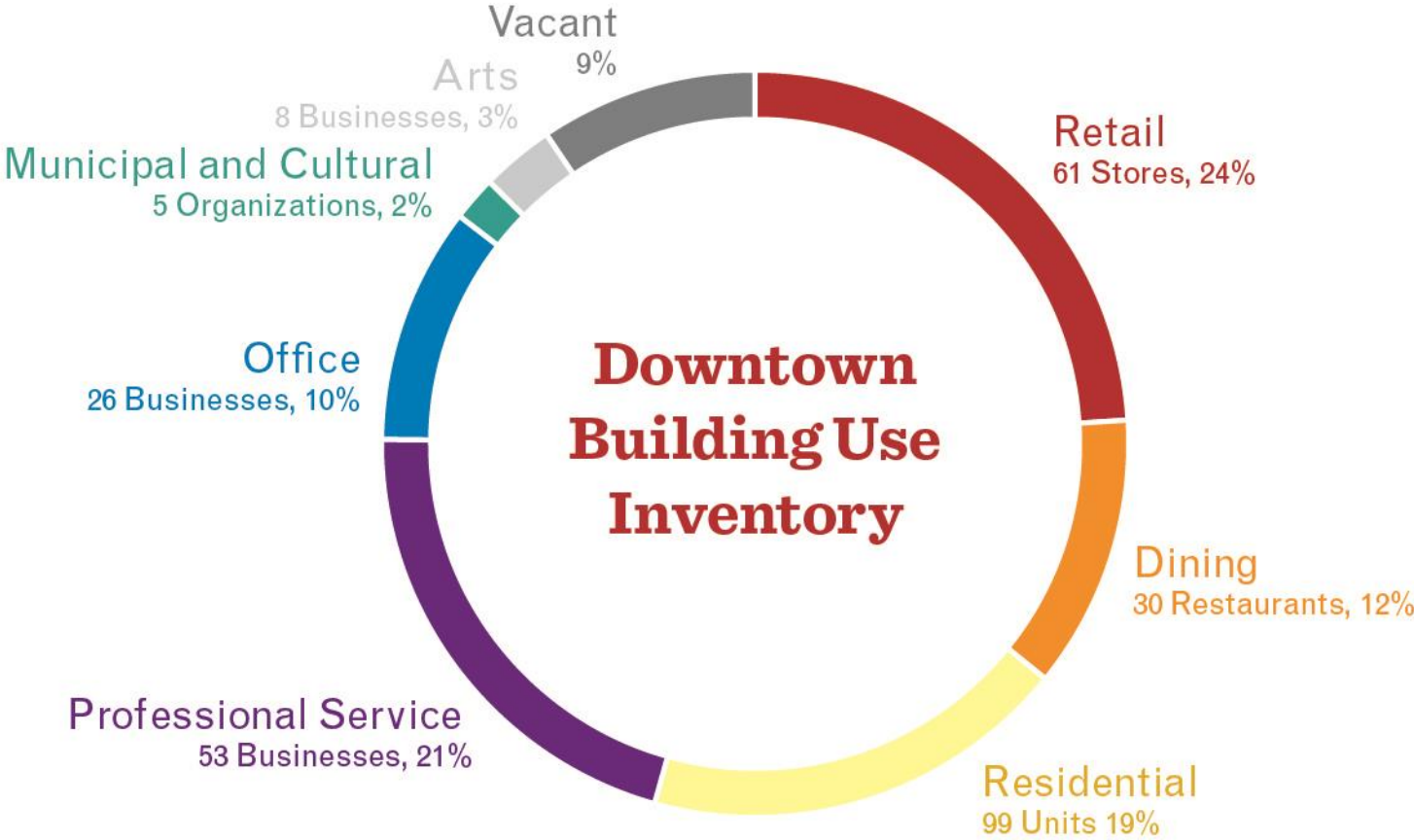


Curating Main Street

Determine vacancies and capacity of Main Street buildings for additional housing and retail.

- The occupancy rate of built space along Main Street is 91%, leaving 9% of the space for future uses.

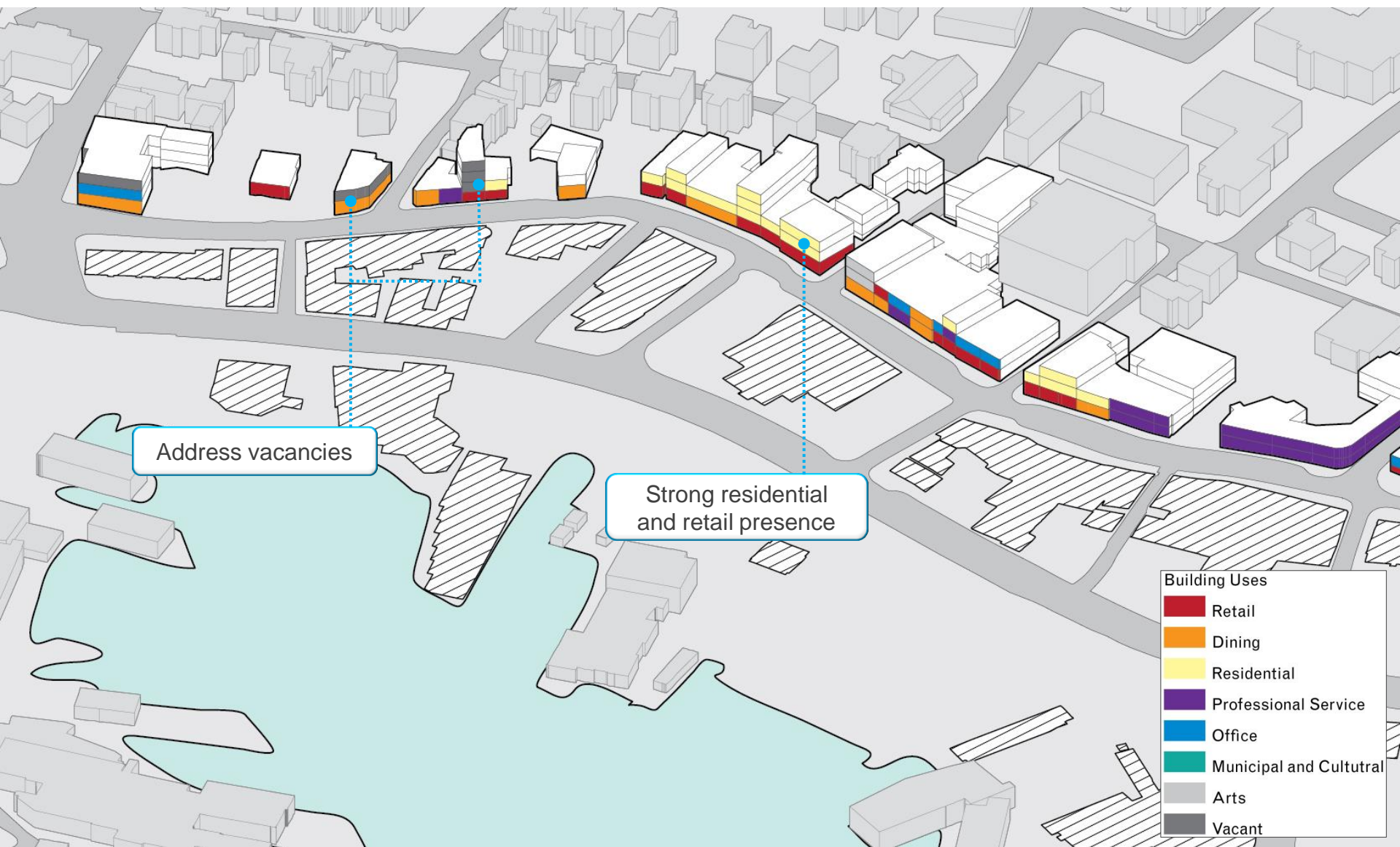


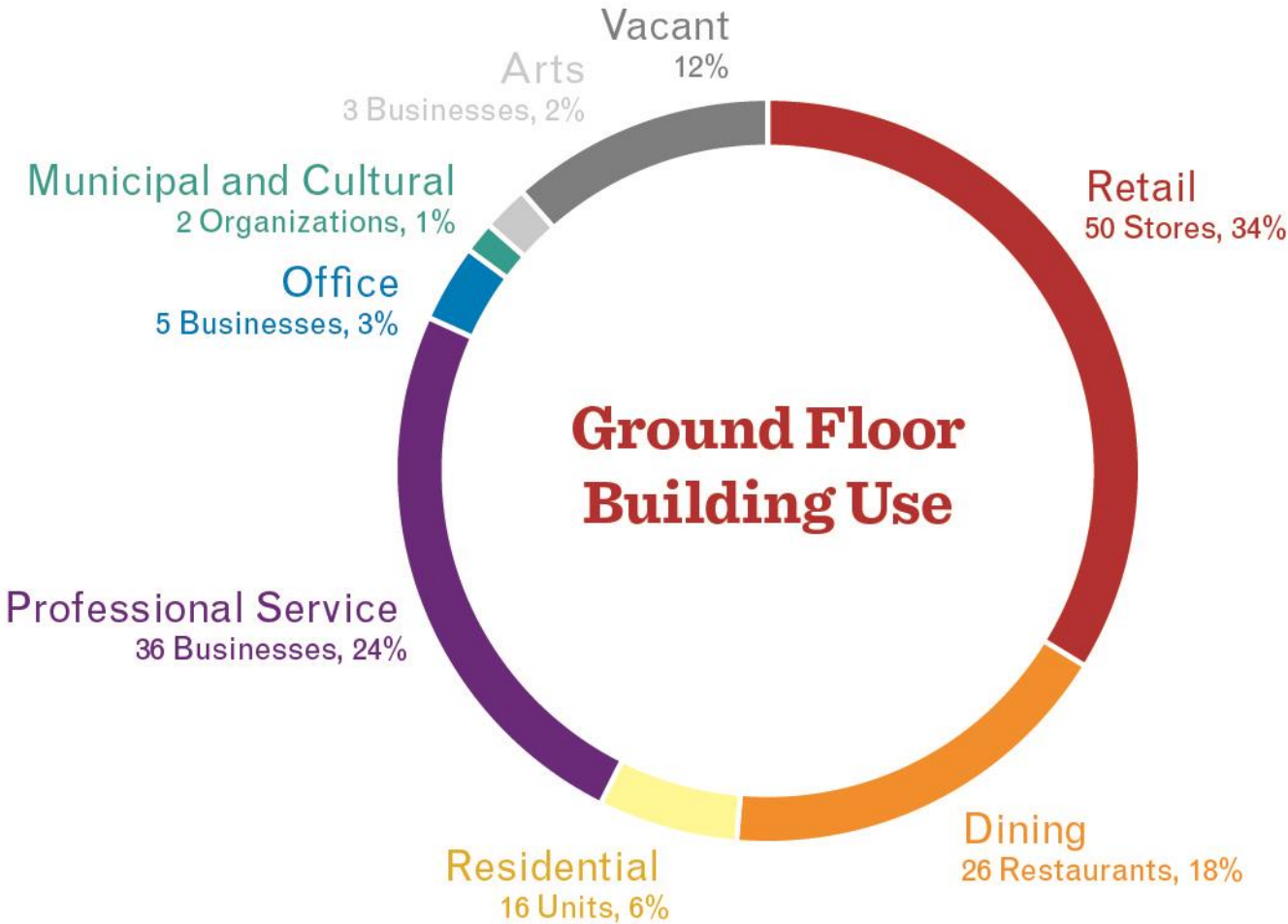


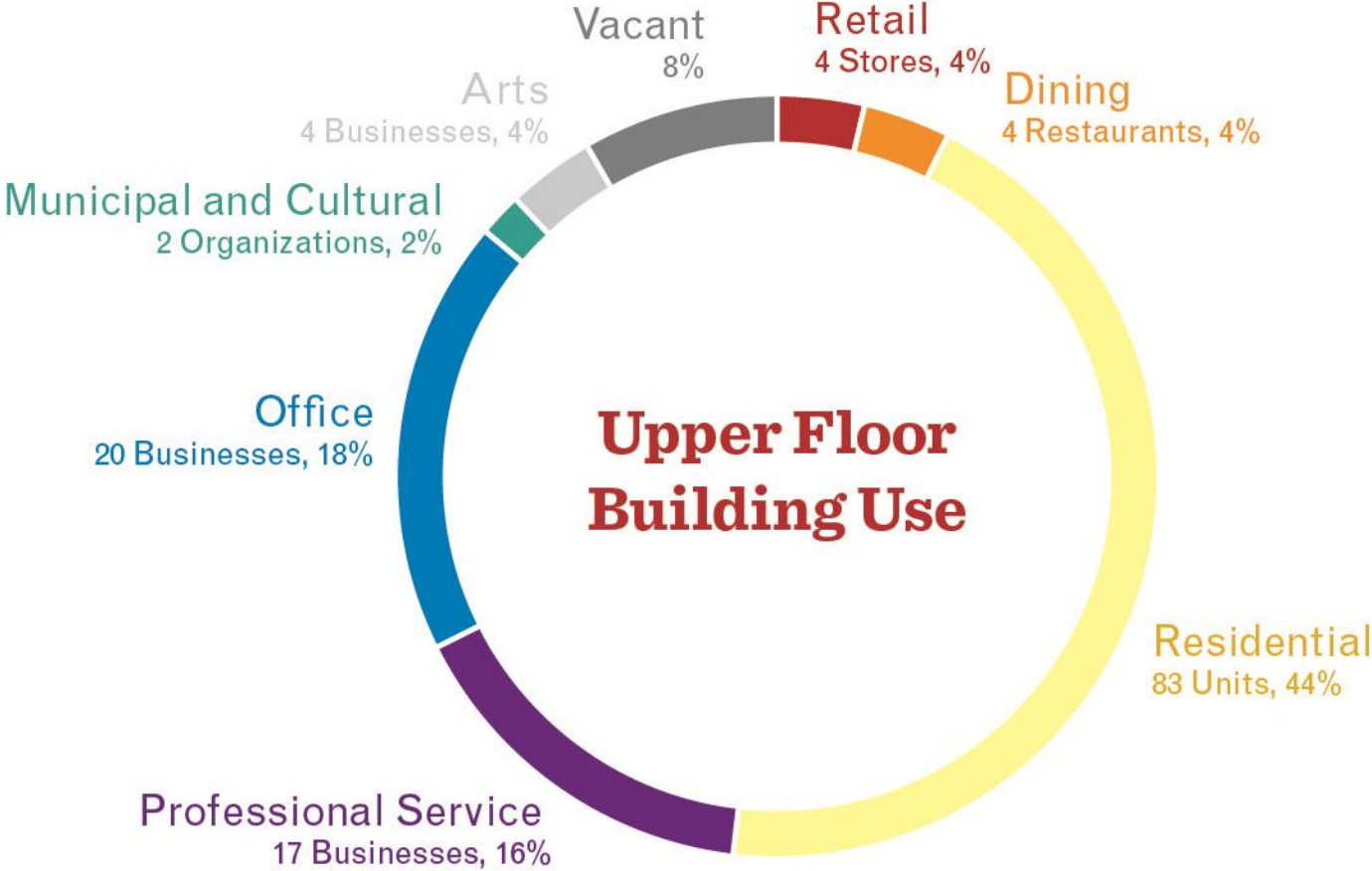
Main Street has a healthy mix of businesses, tourism, and local/regional services and retail amenities



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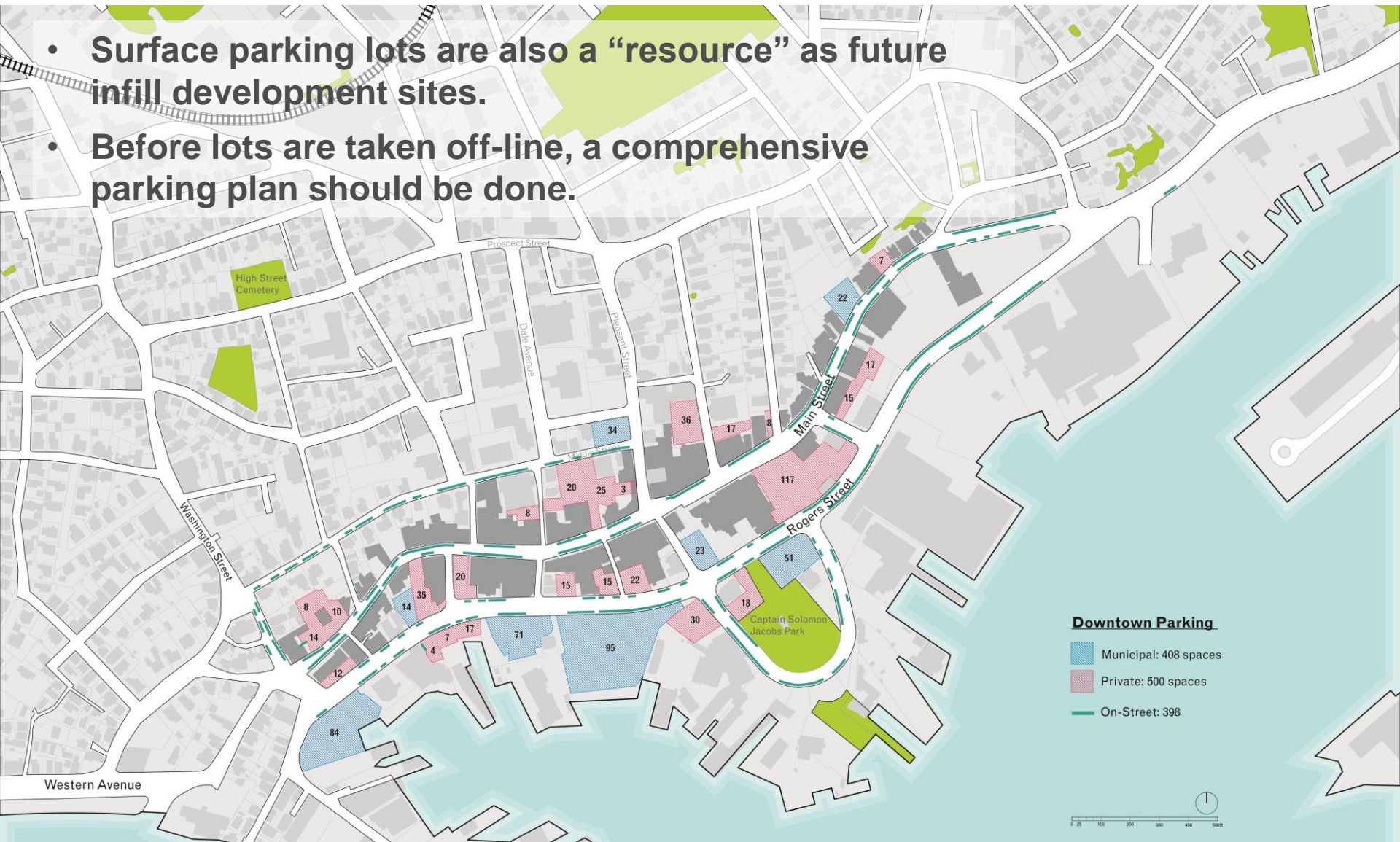
Curating Main Street

How should new development along Main Street look and feel?

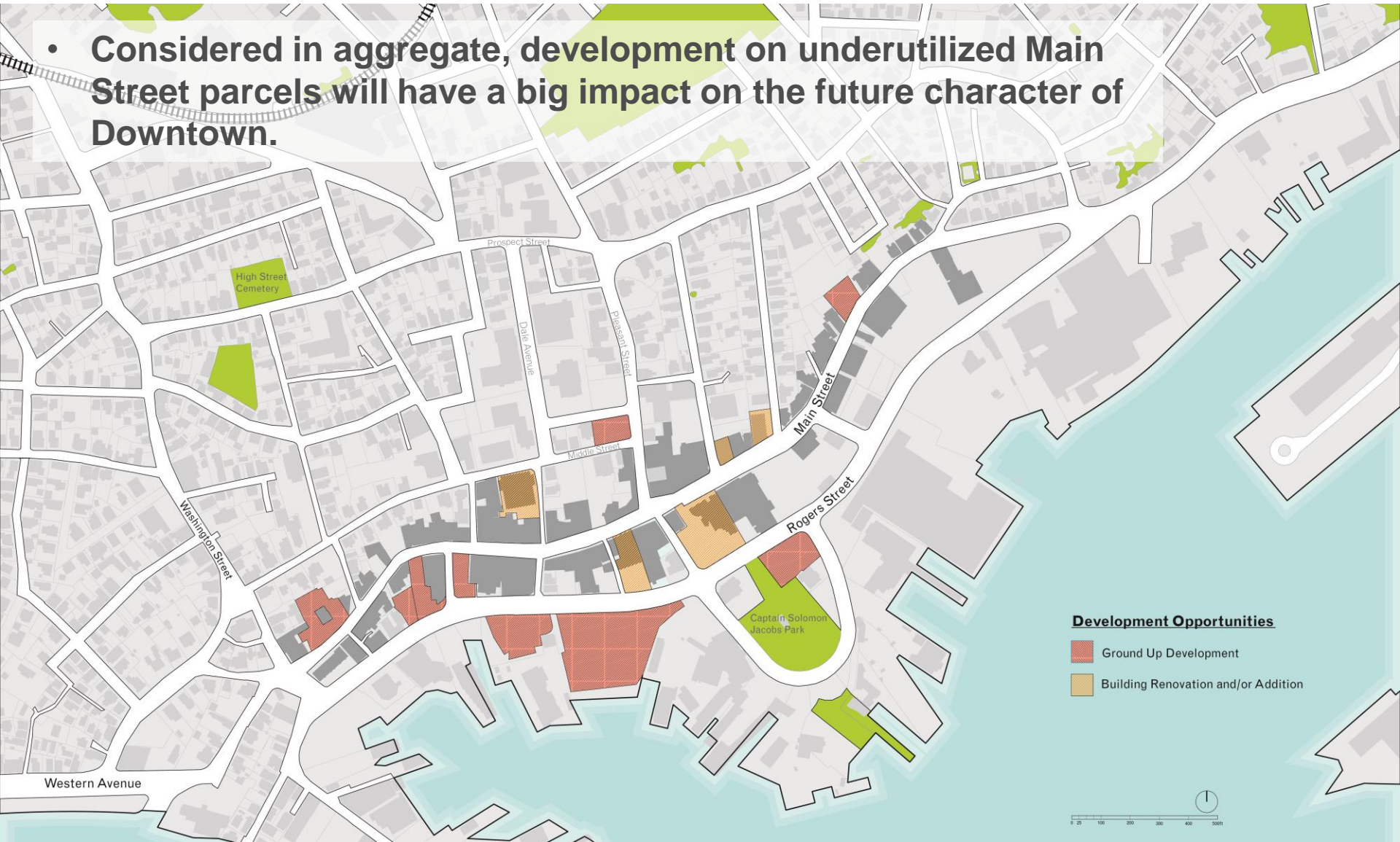
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- Surface parking lots are also a “resource” as future infill development sites.
- Before lots are taken off-line, a comprehensive parking plan should be done.



- Considered in aggregate, development on underutilized Main Street parcels will have a big impact on the future character of Downtown.



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- Vacancies, parking lots, and single story buildings can offer opportunities to bring additional desired active uses downtown.
- New development can restore the urban design character of Downtown.



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Variation in building heights resolves uniform elevations

Elements such as a continuous cornice or banding creates a visual relationship between buildings

Maintain active upper story uses

A three story building respects the scale of Main Street and maintains active ground level uses.

Appropriate placed signage varies between blade signs, flat signs and window signs

Look at the positive attributes of existing buildings to inform new development

Maintain ground floor transparency for engagement between exterior space and building interior

Buildings are generally placed at the back of sidewalk along Main Street and maintain a scale of one to four stories



Primary entrance fronts on Main Street and provides transparency

Double height windows give the appearance of a high ground floor

Edge of building meets the back of sidewalk creating an intimate engagement with the pedestrian

Next steps for the City

Public Improvements

What is needed?

- Maximized utilization of existing parking
- Improved circulation and accessibility to parking
- Improved wayfinding and streetscapes throughout downtown and connect to the waterfront, train station, and residential neighborhoods
- Maximized use of civic spaces
- A better visitor experience, including examining the need for a new visitor center

Next steps for the City

Building Use and Design

What is needed?

- Fill empty storefronts on Main Street with active ground-floor uses
- Fill upper story vacancies
- Exploration of different housing types and options
- Continued support of art and cultural uses
- Ensure quality of design

Next Public Meeting

Establish Action Plan and Timeline!

September 17 / City Hall / 6:00pm